Amendments to the Claims

1.   (currently amended) A method of conferencing comprising forming a main conference between a plurality of users, providing a user with an option to request a subconference with a subset of other users, forming a subconference between said user and the subset of other users, and at least partially removing those users in the subconference from the main conference during the subsistence of the subconference, wherein each of the main conference and the subconference utilise at least one of a plurality of media types selected from the group consisting of video, audio and data signals, wherein communications made using said one or more media types selected for use in the subconference are not communicated to users outside the subconference, wherein users in the subconference selectively utilise one or more of said media types, and wherein users in the subconference can actively or passively participate in the main conference in at least one media type during the subsistence of the subconference, independently of the media types used in the main conference.

2.   (cancelled)

3.   (original) A method of conferencing according to claim 1, wherein the users in the subconference are prevented from contributing to the main conference but are able to monitor communications in the main conference during the subsistence of the subconference.

4-6.   (cancelled)

7.   (previously presented) A method of conferencing according to claim 1, wherein the media types utilised in the main conference include audio and data, and wherein the subconference utilises data signals.

8.   (original) A method of conferencing according to claim 1, wherein the users in the main conference are presented with a list of the main conference participants, the option

2

to request a subconference is provided by enabling a user to select participants from said list, and wherein a subconference list is generated and presented to the users in the subconference.

9.   (original) A method of conferencing according to claim 8, wherein the users in the main conference are presented with said subconference list during the subsistence of the subconference.

10.   (original) A method of conferencing according to claim 8, wherein the users in the main conference are not presented with said subconference list during the subsistence of the subconference.

11.   (original) A method of conferencing according to claim 1, wherein the main conference is formed on a conference bridge to which each of the main conference users is connected.

12.   (original) A method according of conferencing to claim 11, wherein the subconference users remain connected to the bridge and the subconference is formed by creating a second conference on the bridge simultaneously with the main conference.

13.   (original) A method of conferencing according to claim 1, wherein the user(s) to whom the request is addressed have the option of accepting or refusing to join the subconference, and wherein such acceptance or rejection determines whether or not they remain as part of said subset.

14.   (original) A method of conferencing according to claim 1, wherein each user in the subconference is provided with the option to leave the subconference at any time during the subsistence of the subconference.

3

15.   (original) A method of conferencing according to claim 14, wherein users opting to leave the subconference are automatically returned to full participation in the main conference.

16.   (original) A method of conferencing according to claim 1, wherein users in the subconference are presented with the option of requesting one or more of the other subconference users to join a nested subconference within said initial subconference.

17.   (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein users in the subconference are presented with the option of requesting one or more of the other subconference users to leave said initial subconference and form a new subconference without rejoining the main conference.

18.   (currently amended) A conferencing server comprising:

i)   a main conference list memory unit for maintaining a list of the users connected to the server as part of a conference,

ii)   main signal processing means for receiving incoming signals of different media types selected from video, audio and data from said users, processing said signals and generating outgoing signals to said users,

iii)   a main control unit for controlling said main conference list memory unit and said main signal processing means,

iv)   a subconference list memory unit for maintaining a list of a subset of said users,

v)   subconference signal processing means for generating outgoing signals to said subset of users, wherein the signals generated by said subconference signal processing means include subconference signals which are not included in the signals generated by said main signal processing means and sent to users outside said subset, and

vi)   a subconference control unit for controlling said subconference list memory unit and said subconference signal processing means, said subconference control unit being dynamically programmable cause said subconference signal processing means to generate

4

outgoing signal streams containing a user selected combination of media types selected
from the incoming signals from the users subconference, independently of the media
types used in the main conference, wherein communications made using said one or more
media types selected for use in the subconference are not communicated to users outside
the subconference.

19.   (original) A conferencing server according to claim 18 wherein the main
conference list memory unit and the subconference list memory unit are logical areas
within a single memory unit.

20.   (original) A conferencing server according to claim 18 wherein the functions of
the main signal processing means and of the subconference signal processing means are
carried out by the same signal processing unit.

21-23. (cancelled)

24.   (original) A conferencing server according to claim 18, wherein said main control
unit includes means for forwarding said list of users in the conference to each of the
users.

25.   (original) A conferencing server according to claim 18, wherein said
subconference control unit includes means for forwarding said list of said subset of users
to said subset of users, and optionally to all users on the list maintained in the main
conference list memory unit.

26.   (original) A conferencing system comprising a conferencing server according to
claim 18, a call server connected to the conferencing server, and means for connecting
users to the call server.

5

27.   (currently amended) A computer program product containing software in machine readable form for managing a conference, said software comprising means for generating and maintaining a list of participants in a main conference, means for providing a participant with an option to request a subconference with a subset of other users in said list, means for forming a list of participants in a subconference between said participant and the subset of other participants, and means for at least partially removing those participants in the subconference from the main conference during the subsistence of the subconference,

wherein said main conference is conducted in a plurality of media including video, audio and data, wherein communications made using said one or more media types selected for use in the subconference are not communicated to users outside the subconference, and wherein said means for providing a participant with an option to request a subconference includes means for enabling said participant to select one or more of said media for use during said subconference, independently of the media types used in the main conference.

28.   (cancelled)

29.   (currently amended) A computer program product containing software in machine readable form for managing a conference, said software comprising means for forming a main conference between a plurality of users, means for providing a user with an option to request a subconference with a subset of other users, means for forming a subconference between said user and the subset of other users, and means for at least partially removing those users in the subconference from the main conference during the subsistence of the subconference wherein said main conference is conducted in a plurality of media including video, audio and data, wherein communications made using said one or more media types selected for use in the subconference are not communicated to users outside the subconference, and wherein said means for providing a user with an option to request a subconference includes means for enabling said user to select one or more of said media for use during said subconference, independently of the media types used in the main conference.

6

30.   (currently amended) A computer program product containing software in machine readable form for enabling a user at a multimedia terminal to participate in a main conference, said main conference utilising at least one of a plurality of media types selected from the group consisting of video, audio and data signals, said software comprising means for presenting to said user an identification of participants in the main conference, means for enabling the user to generate a request for a subconference with one or more other users participating in said conference, means for forwarding said request to a conference server to which the terminal is connected, and means for enabling the user to select at least one of said media types for use during said subconference, independently of the media types used in the main conference, wherein communications made using said one or more media types selected for use in the subconference are not communicated to users outside the subconference.

31.   (cancelled)

32.   (currently amended) A terminal for use in a conference utilising at least one of a plurality of media types selected from the group consisting of video, audio and data signals, said terminal comprising a display unit for displaying a list of conference participants, input means for enabling a user to generate a subconference request with one or more of the conference participants, means for forwarding this request to a conference server, and means for enabling the user to select at least one of said media types for use during said subconference, independently of the media types used in the main conference, wherein communications made using said one or more media types selected for use in the subconference are not communicated to users outside the subconference.

33.   (original) A terminal according to claim 32 when in the form of a telephone handset

34.   (original) A terminal according to claim 32 when in the form of a multimedia terminal.

7